

# Herbert Hoover National Historic Site General Management Plan

## *Alternative C*

### **Concept:**

This alternative would emphasize the preservation and protection of natural and cultural resources. Visitor services and facilities would have the least possible impact on resources. Scientific management of the prairie ecosystem would take precedence over recreational use and interpretive access. Interpretive programs and visitor activities may limit physical access to historic structures to prevent the adverse impact of visitor use.





The following pages describe management prescriptions for each management zone.

## Cultural Zone

### *Desired Resource Conditions and Visitor Experiences*

*This zone would preserve, protect, and maintain historic structures in an exemplary condition with preservation and rehabilitation treatments. Preservation of the cultural landscape would continue to provide strong visual support for the historic structures. Natural resources would remain in a scientifically stable condition. Visitors would have a high probability of encountering staff and volunteers who would explain the significance of the cultural resources. They would encounter very few wayside exhibits and audio stations intruding upon the integrity of the cultural landscape. Visitors would have access to historic structures only to the extent that such use would not threaten the long-term integrity of the resources. Interpretation would emphasize the significance of the historic structures and cultural landscape in relation to the childhood of Herbert Hoover. Visitors would have a high probability of encountering other visitors. They would have a limited opportunity for solitude and reflection in the Gravesite area. Facilities would provide pedestrian and vehicular access to significant resources. Rehabilitated historic structures would contain museum exhibits, staff housing, or offices only if such use would not jeopardize the structures.*

### **Resource Management**

The Historic Site would conduct studies to determine and evaluate existing conditions of all its historic structures. The NPS would provide appropriate preservation treatment to the structures in a priority order based on the urgency of need. The Historic Site would conduct an ongoing monitoring program to analyze the impact of existing use on rehabilitated structures. While the NPS would strive to use historic structures rather than new buildings for its operational needs, it would not permit any use that might jeopardize an historic structure.

The NPS would continue to manage the Isaac Miles Farm as a primary cultural resource including the rehabilitation of its structures.

The NPS would manage the cultural landscape to preserve the period of significance. The landscaping in this zone would retain its existing appearance. No development or use would take place that would jeopardize the integrity of those resources in the period of significance. In particular, the Birthplace Cottage, Gravesite, and HHPL would remain free from any development or activity other than interpretive or commemorative use.

### **Interpretation**

Interpretation would take place in historic structures in a manner that would have no significant adverse impact on them.

Interpretive programs would emphasize the significance and meaning of natural and cultural resources related to Hoover's boyhood while taking special care not to jeopardize these resources. Programs and exhibits would provide visitors with multiple opportunities to understand and appreciate the connection between Hoover's boyhood and his later accomplishments. Paid staff and volunteers would offer informal interpretive services at the principle cultural resources including the Gravesite, the Birthplace Cottage, the Friends Meetinghouse, Blacksmith Shop, and the Schoolhouse.

Guided tours would emphasize the overall impact of Hoover's boyhood upon his adult life and careers.

Special exhibits in the PT Smith house would emphasize particular aspects of either natural or cultural resources. Education programs, presented in an off-site facility owned by the HPLA would emphasize the Historic Site's natural and cultural resources.

A system of wayside exhibits would interpret cultural resources. The current unobtrusive audio stations would substitute for wayside exhibits at locations where wayside exhibits would hinder visitor experiences of the resources.

### **Visitor Capacity and Circulation**

The NPS would develop a program to document baseline conditions of resources; then periodically monitor and record the impact of visitor use on natural and cultural resources. Conditions of the Birthplace Cottage, the Friends Meetinghouse, the Schoolhouse, and the Blacksmith Shop would receive primary emphasis. If public use appeared to jeopardize any resources, the NPS would modify its interpretation program or limit visitor access to mitigate the problem.

Visitors would continue to receive encouragement to use the existing pedestrian circulation system to experience and appreciate resources in this zone.

### **Visitor Facilities to be Expanded, Removed, or Restricted**

The NPS would rehabilitate the first floor of the P.T. Smith house to provide space for special exhibits.

### **Offices, Maintenance Facilities, and Utilities**

The NPS would rehabilitate the Varney house for offices and storage. It would rehabilitate the second floor of the P.T. Smith house for offices or storage. The Varney house, CE Smith house, and Garvin house would provide space for offices.

## Natural Zone

### *Desired Resource Conditions and Visitor Experiences*

*This zone would preserve, protect, and restore the tallgrass prairie ecosystem to a good condition. This natural, spacious setting would support the dignified character of the Cultural Preservation Zone without jeopardizing cultural resources in that zone. This zone would not have any significant cultural resources. Public use would take place in this zone only in ways that did not jeopardize natural resources and processes. Simple, unpaved footpaths would represent the only facilities in this zone. They would provide visitor access to the area in a way that would not jeopardize natural resources. Visitors would have a low probability of encountering staff or other visitors with a high degree of solitude and sense of discovery. Organized interpretive programs and environmental education would occur on a regular basis. A few wayside exhibits that would not intrude on natural resources would explain natural processes, promote environmental stewardship, and interpret the influence of the natural world upon Herbert Hoover. Recreational walking and cross-country skiing could take place, but would not be encouraged.*

### **Resource Management**

The scientific restoration of the prairie in the natural environment area would take precedence over interpretation programs and recreational activities in the prairie. Such activities would take place only in a manner that would not damage natural resources or disrupt resource management operations.

The NPS would attempt to restore a tallgrass prairie ecosystem by promoting an increased diversity of native plant and animal species while actively preventing the invasion of exotic plant species into the prairie. Actions would include an aggressive, comprehensive program of prescribed burns and species restoration. The NPS would take actions to increase the number and diversity of the prairie's forb species. The NPS would use herbicides to control the growth of woody plants in areas not suitable for prescribed burns. An ongoing program of scientific inventories, monitoring, and research would analyze the current health of the prairie, progress toward ecosystem restoration, and the impact of interpretation and recreational activities upon natural resources. The NPS would ensure that natural resource management actions would not impact cultural resources.

Upon expiration of the life estate interest in the Thompson Farm, the NPS would expand the prairie ecosystem by seeding existing farm fields to prairie.

The NPS would conduct a scientific study to determine if the removal or modification of any culverts, roads, or bridges would support the stabilization of the Historic Site's riparian areas or the mitigation of the periodic floods of "Hoover Creek". The NPS would implement any actions recommended in the study that would provide significant benefit for the Historic Site's natural resources.

## **Interpretation**

Limited guided tours of the prairie would emphasize the significance of its natural resources, as well as their connection to Herbert Hoover. Additional exhibit and audio-visual materials would provide educational opportunities. The NPS would conduct an extensive environmental education program.

## **Visitor Capacity and Circulation**

The NPS would develop a program to document baseline conditions of resources; then periodically monitor and record the impact of visitor use on natural resources. The condition of the prairie would receive primary emphasis. If public use appeared to jeopardize any resources, the NPS would modify its interpretation program or limit visitor access to the resources to mitigate the problem.

## **Visitor Facilities to be Expanded, Removed, or Restricted**

The NPS would not add any visitor facilities. If visitor use appeared to affect the prairie in an adverse way, the NPS would restrict visitor use by reducing the length of the prairie trail system or relocating portions of a trail to mitigate the problem.

## **Offices, Maintenance Facilities, and Utilities**

None.

## **Development Zone**

### ***Desired Resource Conditions and Visitor Experiences***

*This zone would welcome visitors with a comprehensive orientation to the Historic Site, HHPL, HPLA, and City of West Branch. A new orientation center would offer visitors a variety of quality orientation and interpretive experiences. Visitors would have a nearly constant interaction with other people and a high probability of encountering staff responsive to their need for information. They would have almost no opportunity for quiet and solitude. This zone would not contain any significant natural or cultural resources. While the natural setting would undergo substantial modification and intensive management, development would have a low impact on nearby natural or cultural resources, especially the view from the Gravesite. The design of the facility would attract the attention of motorists on Parkside Drive, but express great sensitivity to the natural landscape. Landscaping would include only native species. This zone would include hardened circulation and parking areas. The intensively maintained orientation center would provide a safe and aesthetic work environment for staff. Its minimal physical footprint would remain responsive to its orientation and interpretation functions. To the greatest degree practical, the center would represent a model of best management practices and sustainable development. The facility would contain and mitigate the impact of pollutants, storm-water runoff, and other disturbances on adjacent zones.*



## **Resource Management**

Natural resources would undergo substantial modification and intensive management with a high degree of landscaping with native species.

## **Interpretation**

The NPS would work with officials of the HPLA, HHPL, and the City of West Branch to ensure that visitors at the orientation center receive a comprehensive orientation to the resources of the Historic Site, the HHPL, and the City of West Branch. Orientation would emphasize the significance and meaning of the resources. The design of the orientation center would strive to have minimum impact on the management zones surrounding it. The orientation center would provide information services, orientation exhibits, museum exhibits, an interpretive film, publications, and a cooperating association sales area.

The NPS would relocate the Travelers Information System to the orientation center to continue to broadcast an orientation message to travelers on Interstate 80 a few miles east or west of West Branch. The message would emphasize the natural and cultural resources of the Historic Site.

## **Visitor Capacity and Circulation**

The orientation center would include parking and traffic/pedestrian circulation. Sidewalks would connect the orientation center to the HHPL and the Downey Street trace. Although the orientation center's parking lot would provide a few spaces for recreational vehicles and buses, most would park in the Water Street parking lot. If a need for overflow parking developed in the future, the NPS would work with the City of West Branch to designate an overflow parking area in the city.

## **Visitor Facilities to be Expanded, Removed, or Restricted**

The NPS would build an orientation center in the development area for the beginning of most visits to the Historic Site. The center's design would have minimum impact on the Cultural Zone, especially the Isaac Miles Farm, and HPLA's building. The orientation center would include an information/fee collection desk, orientation exhibits, cooperating association sales and storage areas, theater, special exhibits preparation area, public rest rooms, staff offices, and a parking lot for cars, recreational vehicles, and buses.

New sidewalks would connect the orientation center with the HHPL, the Downey Street trace, and the Isaac Miles Farm. The NPS would work closely with the HPLA to ensure that the new sidewalks do not affect their property and their operation.

## **Offices, Maintenance Facilities, and Utilities**

The orientation center would include office space for the fee collection, interpretation, and cooperating association operations.

### **Maintenance Zone**

#### ***Desired Resource Conditions and Visitor Experiences***

*This zone would provide a safe, low-profile location for the Historic Site's maintenance operations. Although the setting would undergo substantial modification and intensive management, the design of new buildings would remain compatible with the rhythm, order, circulation, and character defining features of the Thompson Farm buildings. The facility would harmonize with the setting of the adjacent zones. Where feasible, the facility would employ rehabilitated farm structures. The physical footprint of structures and stored materials would remain minimal. This zone would include hardened circulation and parking areas. To the greatest degree practical, the facility would serve as a model of best management practices and sustainable development. The facility would contain and mitigate the impact of pollutants, storm-water runoff, and other disturbances on adjacent zones. Only limited, incidental visitor access would occur in this zone with no visitor facilities, trails, services, or programs. Visitors would encounter staff conducting maintenance functions. They rarely would encounter other visitors. The facility's landscaping would limit its visual and auditory impact upon visitors in adjacent zones while creating a harmonious setting with adjacent natural resources. Landscaping would include only native species.*

#### **Resource Management**

Where feasible, the new maintenance facility would employ rehabilitated structures at the Thompson Farm. The design of new buildings would remain compatible with the rhythm, order, circulation, and character defining features of the farm. The NPS would stabilize farm buildings not suitable or feasible for use in the maintenance facility.

#### **Interpretation**

No active interpretation would take place in this area of limited incidental visitor access. Publications would interpret the history of the Thompson Farm.

#### **Visitor Capacity and Circulation**

None.

#### **Visitor Facilities to be Expanded, Removed, or Restricted**

None.



## **Offices, Maintenance Facilities, and Utilities**

The NPS would establish a centralized maintenance facility in this zone. This facility would include space for offices, shops, a small parking lot, and storage for vehicles, equipment, and supplies. Where feasible, the new maintenance facility would employ rehabilitated structures at the Thompson Farm. The NPS would move a prefabricated building in the existing maintenance facility to the new location. New construction of buildings would supplement the existing structures and the prefabricated building. The NPS would construct paved service roads to connect the maintenance facility with the Loop Road and with the Herbert Hoover Highway.

The NPS would install utilities necessary to support the new maintenance facility.

## **Open Space Zone**

### ***Desired Resource Conditions and Visitor Experiences***

*This zone would provide an open, spacious atmosphere to support the commemorative setting of the Historic Site. Natural Resources would remain in a highly manipulated condition as agricultural fields or as maintained groundcover vegetation. This area would not contain any significant cultural resources. Vegetation would include non-native species. Only limited, incidental visitor access would occur in this zone with no visitor facilities, trails, services, or programs. Visitors would rarely encounter other people. Contact with staff would remain limited to employees conducting maintenance functions.*

### **Resource Management**

The NPS would continue to manage this zone as maintained ground cover including non-native grass species. This would enhance the open, spacious area of the Cultural Zone.

### **Interpretation**

None.

### **Visitor Capacity and Circulation**

Visitors would have only incidental access to this zone. The NPS would maintain existing sidewalks.

### **Visitor Facilities to be Expanded, Removed, or restricted**

None.

## **Offices, Maintenance Facilities, and Utilities**

This zone would not have any offices or maintenance facilities. Existing utilities would remain.

### **Special Use Zone**

#### ***Desired Resource Conditions and Visitor Experiences***

*This zone would include facilities operated or controlled by other governmental agencies or private interests on lands within the boundary of the Historic Site. The HHPL, the Federal Building, and the Administrative Building for the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library Association, Inc., all support the public's understanding and appreciation of President Hoover. Visitors would have access to the HHPL and the Federal Office Building where they would have a high probability of encountering other visitors. Visitor experiences would include unstaffed museum exhibits, an interpretive film, information desks, sales areas, and visitor convenience facilities. Buildings would dominate natural resources. The design of the east façade of the HHPL represents a significant cultural resource as a tangible connection to President Hoover. The intensively designed and maintained buildings would provide safe and aesthetic work environments for staff.*

## **Resource Management**

The NPS would ensure the maintenance of the visitor center in a clean, safe, and welcoming condition.

## **Interpretation**

The NPS would convert space in the visitor center presently used for orientation, cooperating association sales, and special exhibits into unstaffed museum exhibits about the Historic Site's natural and cultural resources.

## **Visitor Capacity and Circulation**

The NPS would maintain or reduce the visitor center parking lot. If special events or periods of high visitation would fill parking areas, the NPS would direct visitors to alternative parking areas off-site.

## **Visitor Facilities to be Expanded, Removed, or Restricted**

The NPS would convert space in the visitor center from orientation and special exhibits into museum exhibits.

## Offices, Maintenance Facilities, and Utilities

Existing office space would remain in the visitor center. Public rest rooms, the employee break room, conference room, the research library, workroom, and a storage area also would remain in the building.

## Recreation Zone

### *Desired Resource Conditions and Visitor Experiences*

*This zone would provide visitors and local residents with facilities and opportunities for safe recreational activities that do not relate to the commemoration of President Hoover. Activities would include picnicking, kite flying, softball, badminton, volleyball, cross-country skiing, and recreational walking. This zone would include a designated public assembly area for First Amendment activities. Social and group activities would result in a moderate degree of contact with other visitors. Visitors would have a high degree of contact with other visitors during special events and First Amendment activities. Contact with staff would remain limited to employees conducting maintenance and protection functions. Visitors would have safe, accessible, and enjoyable experiences. They would have a low opportunity for solitude. No significant cultural resources would occur in this zone. Natural resources would remain in a highly designed and manipulated condition. Vegetation would include non-native species. Facilities would include picnic shelters and tables, restrooms, drinking fountains, paved sidewalks, and a parking area.*

### **Resource Management**

After removal of the buildings in the present maintenance facility, the NPS would rehabilitate and re-vegetate the area as green space.

The NPS would monitor the condition of the historic Boy Scout picnic shelter to determine the impact of unrestricted public use. If the studies concluded that such use represented a long-term threat to the structure, the NPS would limit use of the shelter.

The landscape in this zone would remain highly manipulated and intensively maintained including the use of non-native species of grass. The NPS would continue to care for the trees and mow the lawns on a regular basis. The landscaping would complement the open, spacious setting of the Cultural Zone.

### **Interpretation**

The NPS would use portions of this zone for interpretive programs and special events to minimize their impact on other zones.

## **Visitor Capacity and Circulation**

The NPS would maintain existing sidewalks. It would strictly enforce capacity limits for the historic picnic shelters.

## **Visitor Facilities to be Expanded, Removed, or Restricted**

If picnic use increased, the NPS would install additional visitor picnic tables.

## **Offices, Maintenance Facilities, and Utilities**

Upon relocation of the maintenance facility, the NPS would remove all buildings in the present maintenance facility area. Utilities in the other areas of this zone would remain.

### **General Prescriptions for this Alternative**

## **Adjacent Land Use**

The NPS would encourage the City of West Branch to adopt and follow growth policies and zoning compatible with the open and spacious setting of the Historic Site. Areas of particular attention would include properties on Downey Street, Wetherell Street, Parkside Drive, and in areas along the northwest boundary proposed for residential and commercial development. The NPS would discourage any development that might threaten its natural and cultural resources.

## **Partners**

Education programs, presented in an offsite facility owned by the HPLA, would interpret the Historic Site's cultural and natural resources. Some programs would highlight resource management actions of the Historic Site.

The NPS would work actively with the HHPL, Hoover family, the Hoover Presidential Library Association, Inc., and the City of West Branch to limit the impact of their programs, activities, and development upon the Historic Site's natural and cultural resources. The NPS would exchange information and expertise about resource management issues with its partners to further protect and preserve each other's natural and cultural resources. The NPS would engage in cooperative ventures with its partners to promote public understanding and appreciation of Herbert Hoover.

## **Staffing**

Staffing levels would reflect an emphasis on resource protection, preservation, and management. Visitor services staff would provide orientation, interpretation of the Hoover story, and educational programs employing the resources of the Historic Site.

## Signs

Directional signs on Parkside Drive would guide vehicular traffic to the orientation center. Directional signs would guide pedestrians from the orientation center to the Downey Street trace, the HHPL, the Birthplace Cottage, the Gravesite, the prairie, and other features of the *Cultural Zone*. Directional signs on Parkside Drive would guide vehicular traffic to the HHPL, the Gravesite, the visitor center parking lot, and the Water Street parking lot.

## Boundary Adjustments

The NPS would not propose any adjustments to its boundary.

## Summary of Needed and Allowable Changes

Management Zone	Needed or Allowable Changes
Cultural Zone	Rehabilitate PT Smith house Rehabilitate Hannah Varney house Install Wayside Exhibits Add preservation staff
Natural Zone	Add natural resource staff Limit visitor access to prairie Enhance scientific study of resources Expand prairie into Thompson Farm fields
Development Zone	Construct orientation center, associated landscape and parking Relocate travelers' information station to new orientation center Provide pedestrian access to the HHPL and the <i>Cultural Zone</i>
Maintenance Zone	Relocate maintenance facility to this zone Restrict visitor access Construct and maintain service roads Construct new buildings and rehabilitate existing buildings
Open Space Zone	Minimal changes from current management
Special Use Zone	Rehabilitate exhibits and offices in existing visitor center Reduce size of current visitor center parking lot if necessary
Recreation Zone	Remove existing maintenance facility Rehabilitate old facility to green space

## **COSTS**

Because of the conceptual nature of this plan, the following cost estimates remain very general. They provide one means for comparing the various alternatives. Future design planning will prepare detailed cost estimates.

### **Development Costs**

Maintenance facility:	\$ 3,062,800
Orientation center:	\$ 1,355,000
Visitor center rehabilitation:	\$ 412,000
P.T. Smith house rehabilitation:	\$ 51,000
Varney house rehabilitation:	\$ 88,000
<u>Wayside exhibits:</u>	<u>\$ 61,000</u>

Total	\$ 5,029,800
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### **Additional Operating Costs**

The orientation center, new maintenance facility, rehabilitated P.T. Smith house, rehabilitated Varney house, and rehabilitated visitor center would cost approximately \$10,000 a year to maintain. The 7.67 additional FTE of operations staff would require an annual cost of \$292,000.

## **PLAN IMPLEMENTATION**

### **Additional Studies and Plans**

This alternative would require additional planning for the orientation center, parking lot, and walkways; the new maintenance facility; and the rehabilitation of the visitor center and the PT Smith house. The planning would detail project design costs, resource impacts, and actions necessary to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act and the Historic Preservation Act.

- Long Range Interpretation Plan/Comprehensive Interpretation Plan
- Education Plan
- Museum Exhibit Plan
- Wayside Exhibit Plan
- Historic Resource Study
- Cultural Landscape Management Plan

- Historic Structure Reports and Structural Analyses for the Thompson Farm barn and the Thompson Farm house.
- Baseline Inventory of Existing Conditions of Natural Resources
- Baseline Inventory of Existing Conditions of Cultural Resources
- Assessment and recommended actions to mitigate the impact of the Historic Site's roads, bridges, and culverts upon natural resources
- Administrative History